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Glenview, Highland Park and Highwood stand to gain millions in tax revenue, thanks to a Navy plan to privatize military housing that would put valuable property back on the tax rolls.

The plan, discussed in a Friday meeting between Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), representatives from the Navy and elected officials from Highland Park, Lake Forest, Glenview and Highwood, would work toward solving two problems--replacing dilapidated housing for military families at Ft. Sheridan and Glenview, and providing their communities with more tax money.

"Bottom line, it is an extra \$1 million for schools and roads for Highwood/Highland Park and Glenview each," said Kirk, who has been negotiating the deal between the Navy and the communities. "You replace '50s inadequate housing and a bunch of ratty, abandoned barracks with homes along the lake with tax income."

Schools in these North Shore towns have the most to gain after years of subsidizing students from military families who live in homes that are owned by the federal government and not taxed.

According to calculations provided by Kirk's office, Glenview School District 34 and Glenbrook High School District 225 would get about \$770,000 a year, compared with the roughly \$136,000 a year they collect now from the federal government for their 223 military students. North Shore School District 112 in Highland Park and Township High School District 113 would get about \$976,000 under the new plan, compared with the \$186,000 the government sends them for their 236 military students.

"This is great news," said District 34 Supt. Gerald Hill, who said the extra money would be welcome because the district faces a \$2 million deficit for fiscal 2005. "Those issues will still be there, but this will put a dent in that."

Whether the new tax revenue will completely cover the cost of educating a military student in these public schools--about \$10,000 a year or more--remains in question, said Highland Park Mayor Mike Belsky.

"We want to be supportive of the military," Belsky said. "But we have had a history of financial stress on our schools."

Under the plan, the Navy would invite a developer to replace 558 of the service's housing at Ft. Sheridan and Glenview with new homes that would be placed on the tax rolls and leased to the military, which would retain ownership of the tax-free land.

Under the plan, the military would reduce the number of homes, now at 729 units, at Ft. Sheridan and Glenview by 29--a major concern for local officials who worried that the service intended to increase its presence in their communities.

Two of the Navy's choice parcels--38 acres in Glenview and 51 acres along Lake Michigan in Highwood and Highland Park--would be sold to the developer to be turned into homes or shops or offices for civilians, depending on what the community wants.

According to a tentative timeline, proposals from developers are due in January, with contracts to be awarded in November, property returning to the tax rolls in 2006 and homes built by 2008, Kirk said.